CHAPTER-IV

British Ascendancy
The year 1827 was the turning point in the history of Sambalpur. The last vestige of the greatness of the Chauhans of Sambalpur ended with the death of Maharaja Sai and the British became the sole master of Sambalpur. Their efforts since the visit of Mr. Motte to Sambalpur was ultimately crowned with success. The year 1827 marked the beginning of the British paramountcy in Sambalpur which ultimately culminated in 1849 in annexation through the Doctrine of Lapse.

Raja Maharaja Sai died, leaving his widow Rani Mohan Kumari and two daughters and without any male issue. The East India Company installed Mohan Kumari on the Gaddi of Sambalpur. The installation of a lady against all established local customs and laws of the land was not an easy task. The sanad dated 31st of March 1821 was granted in favour of Maharaja Sai authorising Zamindari tenure for a period of five years. The powers and area of jurisdiction of the Raja were subsequently enlarged, and he was placed more on the footing of a Chief, exercising sovereign authority by the resolution of the Government dated the 31st of July 1823 but when the Sanad, by which the Raja of Sambalpur held his possession, was renewed in 1826, the tenure was deliberately not declared to be of permanent and hereditary character. The Government was consequently at liberty to adopt whatever arrangement it might deem advantageous for the disposal of the country. The opportune moment to get themselves established arrived with the death of Maharaja Sai in 1827 and the British would not part with this opportunity by putting anybody but the widow Rani Mohan Kumari on the Gaddi of Sambalpur. They were sure that the Rani could not be in a position to control the male officials of the state nor make public appearance for discharging the functions of an administrator of the territory.

1 Letter, dated 19.11.1827 from T. Wilkinson to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government, (NAI).
2 Letter, dated 4.5.1826, from Agent to the Governor General to G. Swinton, Secretary to the Government (Imperial Records Department).
Consequently, they would be the real sovereign of the country. The Rani was also not allowed to adopt an heir and on her demise the Gaddi of Sambalpur would elapse to the Company as the paramount power unless the daughters or their offspring could advance any valid title to the succession.

Further, the Company could gauge the situation and wanted a hench-man on the Gaddi of Sambalpur and were on the lookout for a puppet whom they could recognise as the legal heir. The intention of the Company's Government would be quite clear from the statement of Lt. Kitto who visited Sambalpur in 1838. He wrote "it was to be hoped that on the demise of the Raja, who had no children, the government would avail itself of the opportunity to resume it.

However, Rani Mohan Kumari, though incapable of managing her own affairs and preserving tranquillity without interference of the British, assumed the reign of the state in 1827. Her assumption of power was vehemently resented by the people.

The people detested the rule by a female. Rani Mohan Kumari's administration was full of favouritism. She was weak and oppressive and took away the rights of the Brahmins, Gonds and Binjhals, who were big and influential landlords. They found their privileges threatened and their lands encroached on by the Hindu favourites of the Rani. The economic condition of the people had miserably deteriorated. The result was a sustained revolution for years together by men with bows and arrows against the fully-equipped and trained soldiers.

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1 Letter, dated 30.10.1830 from A. Stirling, Deputy Secretary to Government, to Lieutenant Colonel. Gilbert, Political Agent, Sambalpur.
3 N. Senapati (ed), op.cit, p.70.
4 Ibid., p.73.
The rebellion was mainly centered round the strongholds of the Gond and Binjhal Zamindars who had a feeling that their powers would be usurped by the British Government. It may be stated that Sambalpur and its adjoining territories were mainly inhabited by aboriginal tribes and most of the Zamindars were either Gonds or Binjhalas. These Zamindars had been induced by promises of future rewards by Rani Ratna Kumari to resist the authority of the Marathas, who after a long struggle, proved too powerful for them. The result was that some of them joined Rani Ratna Kumari at Hazaribagh and the rest concealed themselves in the Garjats and the whole of their estates were brought under the Khalsa management.

Since the cession of Sambalpur to the British Government by the Marathas, the Gond Zamindars and Chiefs had petitioned for the restoration of their lands but the petitions had been disregarded with the exception of Maharaja Sai, who put Balabhadra Rai for some months in possession of his village of Bonda. Since then a sense of resistance prevailed among the Zamindars who had been reduced to a state of destitution.

Disturbances broke out and for some years there was an internecine strife between the Government of Mohan Kumari and several tribal Chiefs. Villages were plundered within a few kilometre of Sambalpur. Though Lt. Higgins, with a body of Ramgarh Battalion which was stationed in the fort, drove the insurgents, matters became so serious that it became necessary to march a force from Hazaribagh to put an end to the disturbances. The force was commanded by Capt. Wilkinson.

The first man to confront with Rani Mohan Kumari was Abdhut Sing, the tribal Chief of Bissiekella in Padampur. As a result of his

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1 *Ibid.*, pp.73-74
strong opposition to the Rani, his estate had been disposed by her. Further, his estate was the stronghold of the Gonds, who being deprived of all rights, opposed the installation of a lady to the Gaddi of Sambalpur.

The confrontation took place near the Pupanga Hills. Banamali Rai in charge of the Rani's troops advanced against the insurgents on the 16th of December 1830. One detachment, at the instruction of Capt. Wilkinson, also approached towards the position on the same day. After a skirmish, the followers of Abdhut Sing submitted themselves to Banamali Rai. Pupanga Hill was relinquished and Abdhut Sing made his way towards Debrigarh, the highest peak in the Barapahar range of Hills and now the stronghold of Balabhadra Sing Dao, the Gond Zamindar of Lakhanpur.

Gurudayal Tewari, Subedar of the Ramgarh Battalion, in command of a detachment of 2 Havildars, 3 Naiks, 55 Sepoys and the Dewan Jay Bohidar proceeded towards the position. The detachment was fired on the 22nd of December by a party of rebels under Balabhadra Sing Dao. The Subedar returned the fire of the rebels and tried to advance but he could not proceed further due to difficulty in approach. One sepoy and a burkandaze were wounded and the road was cleared. Abdhut Sing did not submit.

On the 2nd of December 1830 Gangadhar Mishra, the Jamadar of the Ramagarh Battalion, in command of 40 men had been sent towards Bissiekella with a view to inducing Abdhut Sing to dismiss his armed

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1 L.S.S.O'Malley, op.cit., p.79.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
followers. At 1.00 p.m. on the 27\textsuperscript{th} of December 1830, the party was attacked by Abdhut Sing\textsuperscript{1} in which three sepoys were wounded. The rebels, after keeping up a sharp fire of matchlocks and discharge of arrows for sometime, retreated to the Hills with the wounded, leaving three men dead.

The Jamadar Gangadhar Mishra, while returning could learn that Abdhut Sing with his followers had taken position at Babubandha. He, accordingly, proceeded to attack him with his detachment leaving a Naik and seven men in-charge of baggage at Tapesira. The insurgents were dispersed and two sepoys were wounded.

On his return towards Tapesira he fell in with another party of Gonds who had taken advantage of his absence and plundered the Sepoy’s baggage. Circumstances, and the Sepoys having been without food for two days, induced him to march to Sambalpur where he arrived in the evening of the 5\textsuperscript{th} of January 1831, maintaining a receiving fight within nine kilometres of the place\textsuperscript{2}. There was a considerable loss on the side of the Gonds.

On the 8\textsuperscript{th} of January, Abdhut Sing again joined Balabhadra Sing Dao in Debrigarh, and Gangadhar Mishra, the Jamadar marched again to join Gurudayal Tewari\textsuperscript{3}. The combined forces of the Gonds amounted to about 400 men. In the heavy encounter the rebels were successful in burning a part of the village near which the detachment was encamped. They were, however, driven after ten or twelve men got wounded. The party suffered no loss.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{3} Letter, dated 17.1.1831, from Capt. Wilkinson to Colonel Tagan, Adjutant General of the Army Headquarters.
Capt. Wilkinson reached Sambalpur on the 27th of January 1831. The resistance against the Rani as well as the British gained much wider field with the arrival of Mr. Wilkinson in Sambalpur. The discontentment among the Rani's subjects was universal and the people took up arms against the Rani's officials who were very oppressive and corrupt. The great body of rebels were established on the strongholds in the Barapahar range of Hills, Pupanga and Dhama Hills. The dense jungles and the hilly nature of the country facilitated the communication and contact among the rebels. The insurgents were armed with matchlocks, bows and arrows and battle-axe. They were supplied with whatever they required from the different villages in their vicinity and the Gauntias used to help them very secretly so that the Rani could receive no information what so ever. The rebel leaders were Balaram Sing, the uncle of Surendra Sai, Balabhadra Sing Dao, the Gond Zamindar of Lakhanpur, Abdhut Sing, the tribal Chief of Bissiekella and many others who were left in utter destitution.

Balaram Sing with his nephew Surendra Sai took his position in Jharghaty. There, with his initiation, Surendra Sai could congregate some 200 people armed with bows and arrows to resist the Mohan Kumari's Government. Capt. Wilkinson, at the very outset, did not want to carry any hostile attitude against them, he had all the efforts for pacification by negotiation. He sent for Balaram Sing who met with a small party of men at Lapanga. Balaram Sing complained loudly against the manner in which the Rani conducted her affairs. He complained that the Rani had her brother and other near relation from Gangpur who had oppressed the people to an extent beyond their endurance. Further, it

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1 Letter, dated 28.1.1831, from Capt. Wilkinson, Acting Political Agent, South West Frontier to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government Fort William (NAI).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
was told that the oppression which the people had suffered induced all the Gauntias to offer him assistance. Capt. Wilkinson promised to have better arrangement and requested Balaram Sing to disperse his followers. Accordingly the proposal was acceded by Balaram Sing.

Balabhadra Sing Dao and Abdhut Sing the Chiefs of the rebels had ample ground for complaint. They had been deprived of their lands by the Marathas for opposing them at the urgent salutation of Sambalpur. They had been promised of reward ever since the release of Maharaja Sai and his father from Chanda. They urged for their claims but to no avail. They were very active in resisting the authority and many of the Zamindars both of Khalsa and Garjat used to encourage them. Of all the efforts, a direct interview between Wilkinson and the Zamindars could not be possible. The Chiefs considered themselves injured by the Rani’s being on the Gaddi. Sakti Sing, the Raja of Sonepur was the first among the Garjat Chiefs who volunteered himself to help the British Government. At the first instance he could offer a help of 400 armed followers to the British against the insurgents. Capt. Wilkinson, further, requested the higher authority that at least five companies of infantry be sent as soon as practicable to Sambalpur from the nearest point and two hundred horses might be ordered to march from Chhattisgarh which the Raja of Nagpur could easily release from his capital. Accordingly, Capt. Gordon, Acting Resident, Nagpur, was directed to send the necessary force to Sambalpur with least possible delay.

The first act of Sonepur Raja’s loyalty to the British was an information sent to the Government through Banamali Rai stating that Bhawani Sing of Barpali had been liaising with several Chiefs to

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3 Letter dated 11.2.1831, from G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government to Capt. Gordon, Acting Resident, Nagpur, (NAI).
support his claim to the Gaddi. Bhawani Sing was the scion of Bikram Sing, who was the second son of the Raja Baliar Sing of Sambalpur and was given Barpali for his maintenance. Bikram Sing was successively succeeded by Hridaya Sing, Laxmidhar Sing and Pitambar Sing. Bhawani Sing, the son of Pitambar Sing had deputed one Patita Babu to liaison with the Rajas of Patna, Sarangarh, Raigarh and also Sonepur to support his claim to the Gaddi of Sambalpur. Bhawani Sing, in order to put himself in the line, supported the Gonds in resisting the authorities. Under the circumstances and for want of means of putting down all those in arms, Captain Wilkinson deemed it wise in inviting him for a negotiation. Bhawani Sing, with about 300 armed followers, was received by Capt. Wilkinson, the Political Agent, South-West Frontier, on the 6th of February 1831. A full investigation was assured to them.

In spite of all these attempts, a party of a Havildar and 16 men of Ramagarh Battalion were attacked in a defile in the hills south of Dhama by a party of rebels on the 25th of January 1831, on their return from Baud and Athamallic where they had been on command. As a result of this encounter one sepoy was killed and another wounded. The Sonepur Raja immediately reinforced the guards and the rebels left the place.

In the meantime, while reinforcement began to pour into Sambalpur, so that the spirit of dissatisfaction would not spread, the Raja of Nagpur sent orders to the Subedar of Chhattishgarh to send

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2 Letter, dated 7.2.1831 from Capt. Wilkinson to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government Fort William, (NAI).
4 Ibid.
towards Sambalpur 150 horses. The officer, commanding the party reached Sambalpur on the 25th of February 1831.

Inspite of the re-inforcement, Capt. Wilkinson deemed it to be the best policy to gain the confidence of the rebels by negotiation and private conversation. The reasons for such a step can be summed up as follows:

First, Capt. Wilkinson was aware of the fact that Sambalpur had been shortly under the British protection after the death of Maharaja Sai. The East India Company had yet to gain ground. They, in order to perpetuate their hold fully on the land, had to get themselves thorough with the situation.

Secondly, by restoring to all men their estates, Capt. Wilkinson would defeat the object of those, who wished underhand, to forward their own view and might reasonably count on the faithful services of the Gonds in future. The lands to be restored were so situated as to command the whole Barapahar range of Hills, Paharsirgida, Ghens and Luisinga so that in the event of any future rising these Zamindars would prevent the disaffected from taking shelter in those areas and would, when called on by the Rani, perform good service.

Thirdly, to face the resistance of the rebels the British Government would be under the necessity of employing a considerable force to reduce them from the great strength of their holds and the secret aids they would receive. The attachment of the Gonds to the lands of their forefathers was so great and exertion for recovery of them so popular that the authority could not calculate on the continuance of tranquility except by keeping a large force.

1 Ibid.
Fourthly, Capt. Wilkinson expected future loyalty from the Zamindars to the East India Company Government.

With these designs in mind Capt. Wilkinson carried negotiation with the rebels. For pacifying them, two intelligent Chaprasees and two Gauntias were sent to invite the rebel Chiefs. They informed that a sense of distrust prevailed in them and individuals were prevented from coming. Capt. Wilkinson, being determined to restore to all the Zamindars their estates with the Rani's concurrence, carried several private conversations with the Gonds personally.

But difficulty arose concerning the restoration of the estate Bissiekella which had been guaranteed to Banamali Rai as per the reference perceived in Col. Gilbert's letter in the Political Department dated 7th of February 1826. However, Wilkinson conceived it the most advisable plan to give Abdhut Sing and his family the estate of Bissiekella and to Banamali Rai some other place in exchange of Khalsa land to which no other claim existed.

Accordingly, the Zamindars who had been restored to their estates by pattahs granted by the Rani dated 5th of March 1831 were Abdhut Sing, Bissiekella, Arjun Gauntia, Garh Luisinga, Trilochan Rai, Paharsirgida, Balbhadra Rai, Bamda and Seonath Rai, Kudabada and Bareipalli. Consequently the measures taken by Capt. Wilkinson to establish tranquillity were approved by the Government.

1 Letter, dated 7.3.1831 from Capt. Wilkinson to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government Fort William, (NAI).
2 Letter, dated 11.3.1831 from Capt. Wilkinson to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government Fort William, (NAI).
3 Letter, dated 18.3.1831 from G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government to Capt. Wilkinson, Political Agent, S.W.F. (NAI).
In response to the request for re-inforcement by Wilkinson in his letter dated 28th of January 1831, a Detachment comprising six companies was deputed to march towards Sambalpur. Col. Spry, the Officer Commanding, reached Sambalpur on the 19th of March 1831. The Detachment did consist of 450 rank and file and about 1500 followers.

Tranquility being restored, the period of consolidation of the British administration in Sambalpur began. The first action of the British Government was to appoint a Dewan of their choice. The nomination of Joy Bohidar to the office of the Dewan of Sambalpur on Maj. Mackintz’s visit to the district in 1829 had the contrary effect in the administration and created utmost confusion. The Rani had the greatest dislike for him and the Dewan was suspected to be a party of the insurgents in resisting the authority. Therefore, the British Government, in order to have a chance for better hold, felt the necessity of nominating some other person to the office of Dewan of Sambalpur.

Narayan Sekhar and Gadadhar Babu, brother and a relative of the Rani had the greatest influence on her but neither of them was able to exercise to her benefits. The treasure accumulated by Maharaja Sai had been squandered on and the British Government was successful in convincing the Rani about their misconduct. As a result of several personal interviews with the Rani, Capt. Wilkinson could be able to send Narayan Sekhar off and proposed to select an able man as the Dewan whom she could trust.

Balaram Sing of Khinda family was the most intelligent, well respected by the rest of the family and in possession of considerable influence over the inhabitants of the North-East of Sambalpur. But to

1 Ibid.
2 Letter, dated 3.4.1831 from Capt. Wilkinson to G. Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government, (NAI).
take him would mean paving the way for the succession of his nephew Surendra Sai, who would never be a puppet in the hands of the British. Further, the Rani would never consent to Balaram Sing’s nomination because of an apprehension of being deprived of all power. He also, was one of the Chiefs to induce a party of Gonds to resist the authority.

Ultimately, Banamali Rai was nominated as the Dewan. He was remarkably clever and thoroughly acquainted with the condition of the country and its inhabitants. He was, with the sanction of the British Government, duly appointed by the Rani. In order to help Capt. Wilkinson in the administration of Sambalpur, Capt. Marshall of the 68th Regiment, No.9 was ordered to join him and place himself in communication with Capt. Wilkinson. He was allowed to draw the allowance of a 2nd in command of the Ramgarh Local Corps during the time he was to act under orders of the Acting Political Agent in Sambalpur.

After setting up the Dewan on choice, Capt. Wilkinson, in order to stamp out probable resistance against the authority, made a plan for succession to the Gaddi of Sambalpur after the Rani. He was convinced that without the interference of the Government it was improbable on the part of the Rani to preserve tranquillity in the state; hence he took all precautionary measures against any further resistance. He was also aware of the general feeling in favour of the right of the Chauhans to be continued on the Gaddi of Sambalpur. In the fitness of things he considered Narayan Sing of Barpali to be placed near the Rani. Narayan Sing was also the descendent of Bikram Sing, the second son of Raja Baliar Sing of Sambalpur. He, being docile and sober, was not an active

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1 Letter, dated 8.4.1831 from G. Swinton Chief Secretary to Government to Capt. Wilkinson, (NAI).
2 Letter No.92, dated 24.4.1831 from Secretary to Governor General to G. Swinton.
claimant to the Gaddi of Sambalpur. Further, he was neither the Zamindar of Barpali nor Zamindar's son but was the grandson of Pratap Sing, the second son of Bikram Sing. His claim to the throne of Sambalpur in preference to the claims was not maintainable.

In recommending Narayan Sing to be placed near Rani, Capt. Wilkinson had in view conciliating the Chauhans but never contemplated that he should have any further voice and consultation with the Dewan and Rani. It was intended that all communications not personal between the Rani and manager should be made through Narayan Sing who would prevent improper persons approach her with a view to intriguing. Moreover, his presence in the Kutchery would give weightage to the proceedings of the Dewan, who in fact, managed the affairs.

Capt. Wilkinson had it in mind that Narayan Sing, being on the Barpali line, would be agreeable to Bhawani Sing. The other advantage, according to him, was that in the event of its being necessary to remove the Rani, the British Government would have no one else for resisting the course of action. But it was sure that Narayan Sing's elevation would cause much indignation in the heart of Balaram Sing of Khinda who was more objectionable to the Rani than Narayan Sing. It was, therefore, suggested to the Rani to make a reduction in the Malguzari of the Chauhans of Rajpur and Khinda to the former 175 rupees Moolkee or Sicca Rs. 65.10 Annas, and to the later 397 rupees Moolkee or Sicca

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1 Sri Jitamitra Sing Deo, in his unpublished paper “Sambalpur ra sesa Raja Narayan Sing” preserved in the Sambalpur University Archives, stated that Narayan Sing was a “Beherania Babu”. He further states that Raghunath Sai was the illegitimate son of Raja Ratan Sing, the 6th king of Sambalpur, and Narayan Sing was the great-grand son of Raghunath Sai. Hence, his claim to the Gaddi was not maintainable.
Rs.148.14 Annas, to which she readily agreed\(^1\). The larger sum was recommended to Khinda on account of the numerous family of Dharam Sing, father of Surendra Sai. Further, the Zamindars who were recently restored to their Estates were expected to put a stop to any resistance and it was conceived that their zealous exertion at the time of necessity would be well-calculated on.

Having taken the precautionary measures for the pacification of Sambalpur, Capt. Wilkison did not feel the necessity to detain any more the Madras 37 N.I., which was stationed at Sambalpur since the 28\(^{th}\) of March 1831. He, therefore, requested the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort William to intimate to Lt. Col. Spry to march to Nagpur\(^2\). But he wished, with the sanction of the Government, to keep at Sambalpur one hundred of Nagpur Horse for the future management of the country\(^3\).

In spite of the conciliatory policy of Capt. Wilkinson and the changing situation of Sambalpur, the sense of dissatisfaction still prevailed with some of the rebel Chiefs. Abdhut Sing was induced by the Rani's brother Narayan Sekhar to act against the rebels on a promise of having his land restored and on the faith of this promise of having Abdhut Sing acted as the supporter of the Rani on the eve of the estates being restored to different Zamindars on the 11\(^{th}\) of March 1831. He also made no application to Capt. Wilkinson as a result of which the lands in addition to his estate, were not given to him. In order to obtain those lands Abdhut Sing collected a body of people of his own caste and plundered one of the Rani's godowns and carried the plunder to Hills on

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1 Letter, dated 25.5.1831, from Capt. Wilkinson to Chief Secretary to Government.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
the borders of Gangpur and Padampur. No property was destroyed, nor any life lost. The Rani sent for him, but the man was confined by him. Ultimately Phagoo Sing, the Duffadar was sent to conciliate and bring in Abdhut Sing. Accordingly a meeting was arranged between the Rani and him, and ultimately Abdhut Sing agreed to remain quiet on the promise given to him that the “Urzie” would be listened to when the Political Agent returns to Headquarters after his tour.

Though Adhut Sing could come to terms with the Rani, his activities were followed by disturbances and other disorder in the country. The Rani had little influence over the Jagirs. The result was that the authorities were resisted in the forms of intrigue, affray and conspiracies.

The first in the series was a plot hatched by Ranjeet Sing, Bhupal Sing of Jharsuguda line in collaboration with Damoo Bohidar, the uncle of the Rani’s late Dewan Jaya Bohidar.

The Zamindari of Jharsuguda was created in the year 1829 by Rani Mohan Kumari who assigned the estate to Ranjeet Sing, a near relation of her, for the maintenance of his family. Ranjeet Sing was a son of Siva Sing, the grandson of Haribans Sing and the great grandson of Chhatra Sai, the 7th Raja of Sambalpur. Until 1827, Haribans Sing and his successors lived with the successive Rajas of Sambalpur in the palace of the town, and that Ranjeet Sing was even led to hope that he might

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1 Letter, dated 18.5.1832, from Capt. Wilkinson to G.Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government, Calcutta (NAI).
2 Letter, dated 21.7.1866 from Cumberlege, Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur (Board of Revenue Records, Sambalpur).
3 Letter, dated 18.5.1832, from Capt. Wilkinson to G.Swinton, Chief Secretary to Government, Calcutta (NAI).
4 Letter, dated 21.7.1866 from Cumberlege, Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur (Board of Revenue Records, Sambalpur).
succeed to the Gaddi. But on the death of Maharaja Sai, his widow Rani Mohan Kumari assumed the charge of the government. Ranjeet Sing was disappointed at this and the Rani sent him to Jharsuguda where she granted him 13 villages by way of consolation.1

Ranjeet Sing, Bhupal Sing and Bhawani Sing were brothers and detested the rule of a lady. They, with Damoo Bohidar, endeavoured to prevail on Abdhut Sing for the purpose of murdering three or four of the Rani’s “mutsuddies”2 plundering Padampur and Chandrapur and establishing on the Gaddi either Ranjeet Sing or Bhupal Sing. But Abdhut Sing, faithful to the engagement he had with the Rani, communicated immediately about the intention of the conspirators to the Rani. The Rani, being alert, posted guards. On the night of the 9th of June 1832. Ranjeet Sing, Bhupal Sing and Ranjeet Sing’s son Govinda Sing, accompanied by six or seven armed followers went to the Rani and sent Salam3. The Rani, being aware, did not appear before them, and the people, giving caution to her, left the palace. Immediately after them the Subedar was despatched for their seizure and in the night of the 12th of June 1832 the resisters were arrested4. They were put before the Saheb who found them guilty on the charge of insubordination. Ultimately they were confined in the fort of Sambalpur.

Consequent upon the confinement of Ranjeet Sing, Bhupal Sing and Bhawani Sing, another brother took up the cause of the rebellion and opposed the authority of the Rani. An affray between the Barkandazee belonging to the Rani and Bhagawan Sing supported by

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2 Personal attendants of the Rani.
3 Letter No.65, dated 2.8.1833, from Wilkinson, to Secretary to the Government, Political Department, (NAI).
Krishna Ray of Khariar, took place in Chandrapur and Baragarh frontier. Again on the 23rd of July 1832 the Padampur godown of the Rani was plundered by the insurgent Bhagawan Sing with the support of Krishna Ray of Khariar. She sent her people to apprehend the plunderers who fled into the jungles near by in the Kodaboga Zamindari and dispersed. Both the rebels ran off and took shelter in Baragarh. Thakur Ajit Sing of that estate was asked by the Government to deliver them to the Rani but he did not seize them. He was again asked to deliver them to the Rani but he argued that it would be a loss of honour to send them to the Rani, but he would, if the British Government wished, forward them to Hazaribagh. Accordingly, he was directed to do so. At the same time he was informed that the instructions were still in force to seize the insurgents whenever they could be found. Subsequently during the escape of Bhagwan Sing and Krishna Rai two or three more villages of Chandrapur were plundered.

On the 23rd of September 1832, the Rani with the party of Barakandazee proceeded towards Baragarh for apprehending the two rebels. There was an encounter between the Barakandazee and the rebels on the boundary line of Baragarh. Two men were killed on both the sides and many wounded. Further, the king of Raigarh was instructed by the British Government to apprehend the two individuals and the Raja assured the authority that he would exert himself to the utmost to do so. The Rani of Sambalpur also expressed her determination to send her people to Baragarh to seize the two individuals, and if she would be assisted by Raigarh Raja she would prove successful. Accordingly, the

1 Letter No.52-53, dated 5.7.1832 from Capt. Wilkinson to Chief Secretary to Government, Calcutta, (NAI).
2 Letter, dated 23.7.1832 from the Rani, Sambalpur to Capt. Wilkinson.
3 Letter No.52-53, dated 5.7.1832 from Capt. Wilkinson to Chief Secretary to Government, Calcutta, (NAI).
Government addressed to her a purwanah and one to Thakur Ajit Sing, authorising her to seize the two individuals wherever found.

Consequent upon Thakur Ajit Sing’s not delivering Bhagwan Sing and Krishna Rai either to the Rani or the British Government, the troops of the Rani accompanied by those of the Raja of Raigarh entered Baragarh on the 12th of December 1832\(^1\) to apprehend them. They were resisted by Thakur Ajit Sing and some losses were sustained by both the sides, but the Thakur, at last, was overpowered with his followers. Both Bhagwan Sing and Krishna Rai fled.

Capt. Wilkinson recommended forfeiture of the estate of Thakur Ajit Sing and suggested that it may be given to the Raja of Raigarh for his loyal services to the Government\(^2\).

Chandra Behera was a Khond and a dependent of the Bamra Raja in whose estate he had a small purganah bordering on Sambalpur and not farther from the capital than 30 kilometres. Govinda Sing joined him and prevailed on him to support his cause to the Sambalpur Raj. As per the communication of the Rani to Capt. Wilkinson, the Bamra Raja encouraged his dependent to help Govinda Sing in his cause\(^3\). There was an encounter between Chandra Behera with his armed followers and Lt. and Adjutant Hoggan of the Ramgarh Battalion when the former was advancing from Bamra estate for the purpose of attacking Sambalpur and compelling the Rani to nominate Govinda Sing to the Gaddi of Sambalpur. Capt. Wilkinson immediately addressed the Bamra Raja a purwanah that he would be made responsible for the proceeding of his

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\(^1\) Letter, dated 6.1.1833 from Capt. Wilkinson to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort William, (NAI).

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Letter, dated 16.1.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to W.H. Macnaglen, Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, (NAI).
Zamindar and directed him to forbid any assistance being given to Govinda Sing. The Raja of Bamra replied that he could not contact his dependent and had not the power to seize Govinda Sing\(^1\).

Capt. Wilkinson further directed the Vakeel of the Rani, who was present with him, to proceed to Sambalpur forthwith and advised her to give the management of the Raj entirely into the hands of Narayan Sing. Capt. Wilkinson expected that Narayan Sing, being agreeable to Bhawani Sing of Barpali, would have a fair prospect of maintaining his authority.

Baidyanath Babu, the Rani's manager, informed Lt. Hoggan that on the 30\(^{th}\) of January 1833 the insurgents attacked Padampur and killed one of the Rani's fighting men, but did not succeed in plundering it, but the nearby villages were plundered\(^2\). He further informed the Lieutanant that the Rani wrote to her Zamindars like Medini Bariha of Kharmunda, Trilochan Rai of Paharsirgida, Abdhuta Sing of Bissiekella etc. for assistance, but they all refused to extend any assistance and declined even to pay the Malguzari. In fact, the country was in a state of confusion and the hold of the Rani was so weak that the resistance received full support of the people.

Chandra Behera had about three hundred followers of his own caste and possessed great influence over his own tribe in all of the Rani's villages bordering on Bamra. He was able to collect a considerable force by the month of February and commenced plundering the Sambalpur villages. Shickru Mohanty, formerly a Jamadar of Barkandazee prevailed on him to espouse the cause of Govinda Sing

\(^1\) Ibid.
\(^2\) Ibid.
and supported him. A post of the Rani's troops was established at Bamra, adjoining Chandra Behera's estate to protect her country; they were unable to maintain it and retreated to Sambalpur. In the meantime the insurgents came within a short march of the Sambalpur.

On the 4th of February 1833 Lt. Hoggan left Sambalpur with the Detachment for the village Sooran, the Headquarters of the rebels. The insurgents with their bows and arrows could not face the Detachment and were dispersed. Lt. Hoggan advanced as far as Sooran, but found it completely deserted. The Detachment had only one sepoy wounded and one of the Rani's horses got its leg broken. The casualty on the other side could not be ascertained. But it appeared that a good deal of damage had been done to the rebels. There was the mark of two bodies having been dragged off the ground and the ground was on several places covered with blood. Lt. Hoggan returned to Sambalpur on the 5th of February 1833.

The Rani, after the encounter, established three posts on the border of Bamra and an attack was mounted by her people on the temporary huts of the insurgents in Bamra jungle with such ill success that several posts were abandoned by her troops one after another and the country within a short distance of Sambalpur was plundered.

Jagabandhu Babu, a discharged ‘Amla’ of the Rani and Biju a discharged Duffadar joined Govinda Sing and volunteered their services. The power of these men was implicated in the last insurrection in Sambalpur, and proceeded to the west of the River where Jagabandhu Babu succeeded in collecting five to six hundred men under the Gond leaders Mahadeo Gountia of Bysee, Nega Gond of Patna, Bhoji Roy

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1 Letter, dated 8.2.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, Political Department, (NAI).
2 Letter Nil, dated 27.2.183 from Hoggan to Wilkinson.
Gond of Sonepur. With this party in the month of May, he took up a position at Maneswar within twelve kilometers of Sambalpur. There, he was joined by Dhunnanoo and Bada Konds of Banaparea. Rehuoo Biswal of Bispara, Japai Punjanic and Bagrati Pramjani of Dhama, Chumra Gauntia of Roosea, Ioorawn Tookanie of Danea, Bounda Teer of Sambalpur, Sobhanath Gond of Loisinga, and later by Arjun Gauntia. Jagabandhu had not been long at Maneswar before Govinda Sing, Chandra Behera, and Shickru Jamadar with their followers formed a junction there when the whole force amounted from 1500 to 2000 men.

On the 11th of February 1833, six runners in-charge of two months' pay for each of their Chauki amounting to Rs.500/- and above were stopped by a party of rebels at the Muchkundua Ghat and plundered not only their money but their clothes, swords etc. Every precaution had been taken to protect the runners and five paiks had been sent from the village Digpass to escort them as far as Karma. The Dak Munsi reported that the paiks, instead of affording protection had been in league with the rebels and assisted them in the plunder of the runners.

On the 19th of May 1833 a party of insurgents intended to attack the town of Sambalpur and the lead came within nine kilometres of it. Lt. Hoggan detached a party having the strength of one Subedar with sixty sepoys and non-commissioned officers against the rebels. The party came up with the insurgents in the village Tabla and drove them back to a hill in the neighbourhood with the loss of four men and many wounded. The rebels subsequently continued their retreat and the

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2 Letter from C. Babington, Deputy Post Master, Sambalpur to W.F. Dick, Post Master General, Fort William.
3 Letter No.1474 dated 8.3.1833 from W.F. Dick, Post Master General Fort William to G.A. Bushy, Officiating Secretary to Government, General Department, (NAI).
Subedar and his party returned to the cantonments. Nobody was killed, one Havildar and seven sepoys from the Detachment were wounded. The encounter created a considerable amount of alarm amongst the rebels who retired to the hills and fortress of Bamra with a determination of further organisation for resisting the East India Company.

Affairs were, at this period, in such a state that the Rani deemed it advisable to deprive her manager Baidyanatha Babu, of his office and entrusted the conduct of affairs to Narayan Sing Babu who had received assurance from Bhawani Sing Babu of Barpali that he could suppress the insurrection in a few days if Baidyanath Babu was deprived of office. Accordingly, on the 1st of June 1833 the Rani had turned Baidyanath Babu out of his office of manager and put the whole affairs of her country in the hands of Narayan Sing.

At about 7’o clock in the morning of the 3rd of June 1833, between five and six hundred men belonging to Mega Rai and Medini Behera, the brother of Chandra Behera, made their appearance at Dhanupali and came down to the back of the place where the camp of the Detachment and the Rani’s troops were pitched. They fired upon three of the Rani’s sawars, burnt a village and commenced driving off the cattle of the village. Lt. Dring, commanding the Detachment and sending for a reinforcement from the fort, advanced with one of the guns, which was kept in the camp for some days past, as far as the Nullah. Accordingly,

1 Letter, dated 30.5.1833 from Capt. Wilkinson to Col. Beatson, Adjutant General Army Headquarters.
2 Letter No.20 dated 20.6.1833 from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, Political department, (NAI).
3 Letter dated 22.6.1833 from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary, to Government, Political Department, (NAI).
firing was opened and the rebels took to their heels in the direction of Maneswar from where they came.

At 3 A.M. on the 6th of June 1833 Lt. Hoggan, on health ground, left Sambalpur for Hazaribagh and took with him Baidyanath Babu, who was apprehensive, of losing his life if he continued to stay at Sambalpur. Lt. Hoggan faced the insurgents again at Maneswar where they, being reinforced, had taken the position. Lt. Hoggan was compelled by an overwhelming force of the insurgents to return to Sambalpur where he reached on the 8th of June with the loss of not only the whole of his own baggage but that of all his followers. He took position in the fort of Sambalpur. The insurgents, after the sunset, plundered the village Bhatra but did not advance further.

At about 6'O clock, in the morning of the 12th of June 1833 Shickru Jamadar with 500 to 600 men advanced from Bhatra to seize the Sakhi Gopinath. Lt. Hoggan immediately turned out to meet them and, on coming up with the first party, warned them to retire but the rebels paid no attention. Accordingly, firing was opened upon them from the four pounder at 250 metres. The insurgents left the place. The Rani's Barkandazee and sawars followed them and a part of the Detachment advanced beyond the village of Dhuktea where they could know that the rebels had fled towards Maneswar. Shickru Jamadar, it appeared, formed a sort of advanced guard of Govinda Sing who intended to march up to Bhatra only. Ultimately, as a result of the discharge of the Artillery, the rebels broke up their force at Maneswar Govinda Sing, Chandra Behera, Shickru Jamadar with their followers returned to the Hills in Bamra and Jagabandhu Babu crossed over the west of the

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Mahanadi and took position in the Pupanga Hills with a diminished force.

Capt. Wilkinson reached on the 30th of June 1833 at Suruguja, a village of Gangpur within six marches from Sambalpur. He was happy to note that no attempt had been made by the rebels to resist the authority of the Rani or plunder the town of Sambalpur since the 12th of June. The reinforcement despatched from Nagpur under Subedar Omer Khan reached Sambalpur on the 22nd of June 1833. Though the resisters tried to stop their march at Jharghaty, the Detachment could make its way towards Sambalpur.

Capt. Wilkinson reached Sambalpur on the 7th of July 1833. The Detachment made twenty-two successive marches and reached Sambalpur with the least trouble. Capt. Wilkinson, on his arrival lost no time in peremptorily directing the Bamra Raja to join him with his armed followers, and he reached Sambalpur on the 16th of July 1833. He declared, on a personal interview, that he had given no encouragement to Chandra Behera to shelter Govinda Sing and that he would, by the order of the Government, proceed immediately and bring them both provided he would be given 150 of the Rani's troops. The Rani readily agreed to supply the force and accordingly he marched on the 17th of July 1833 and brought Govinda Sing, Chandra Behera, Shickru Jamadar and three other active leaders on the 22nd of July. They were immediately confined. Capt. Wilkinson further directed a force of the Rani's troops to march against the rebels in the Pupanga Hills and sent

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1 Letter, dated 27.6.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to Col. Beatson, Adjutant General, Army Headquarters, (NAI).
2 Ibid.
3 Letter, dated 2.8.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, (NAI).
4 Ibid.
purwanah to all the Zamindars to seize or send to him the leaders of the Resistance Movement who would enter their estates. On the approach of the troops to Pupanga, the hill was abandoned by the insurgents and Jagabandhu Babu, the leader of the party, was seized by the Sonepur Raja and was sent to Capt. Wilkinson on the 25th of July\(^1\). The Zamindars who were with him fled to Patna. Accordingly, orders for their apprehension were sent to Patna Raja\(^2\).

Arjun Gauntia, as the opinion disposed to the Rani, was compelled to join the insurgents and was pardoned. But he was directed to seize or send to the Political Agent, Damru Kond, Rehuoo Biswal, Bada Kond and Sobhanath Gond and four other active rebels who used to reside near his village. The former two were immediately seized and sent to Capt. Wilkinson and intense search was made for securing the others. Besides, other important leaders also were arrested.

Many of the prisoners had been tried in the Rani's court and the following prisoners had been sentenced to death\(^3\).

1. Shickru Jamadar - He was convicted of being one of the instigators, advisor and a leader of the troops of Govinda Sing, the insurgent. Pretender of Sambalpur; in the late insurrection in which murders were committed, property to a considerable amount plundered and the troops of the Rani and the British Government attacked.

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Letter No.67, dated 16.8.1833, from Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, Political Department, (NAI).
2. Jagabandhu Babu - He was convicted of being the most active leader and adviser of the insurgent, Pretender Govinda Sing of Sambalpur; in the late insurrection in which murders were committed, property to a considerable amount plundered and the troops of the Rani and the British Government attacked.

3. Biju Duffadar - He was convicted of being an active agent of the insurgent Govinda Sing of Sambalpur and a sardar amongst his troops, in the late insurrection in which murders were committed, property to a considerable amount plundered and the troops of the Rani and the British Government attacked.

4. Damru Kond of Borapara Zamindari - Both of these men had been convicted of being active leaders of the insurgent, pretender Govinda Sing's troops; in the late insurrection in which murders were committed, property to a considerable amount plundered and the troops of the Rani and the British Government attacked.

5. Khuoo Biswal of Bysapar Zamindari - Convicted of having been an active leader of the insurgent, pretender Govinda Sing's troops; in the late insurrection in which murders were committed, property to a considerable
amount plundered and the troops of the Rani and the British Government attacked.

The sentences were duly concurred by Capt. Wilkinson in his letter No. 67, dated 16.8.1833 addressed to the Secretary to the Government in the Political Department.

The associates of Govinda Sing were sentenced to death. But Govinda Sing, the pioneer of the movement, was spared. He was kept in confinement because Wilkinson deemed it to be the best policy to gain the confidence of the rebel leader by negotiation and private conversation. The reasons for such a step can be briefed as follows:

First, Capt. Wilkinson was aware of the fact that Sambalpur had been shortly under the British protection and the East India Company had yet to gain ground. In order to fully perpetuate their hold, they had to get themselves thorough with the situation.

Secondly, to face the resistance, the British Government would be requiring a considerable force to reduce them from the great strength of their hold. The leader was so popular that the authority did not consider it proper to put an end to his life.

Thirdly, Capt. Wilkinson, expected future loyalty from the Zamindars to the East India Company Government.

Capt. Wilkinson, after taking strong measures for putting down the insurgents, took into account the situation of the country and had the efforts to preserve tranquility. The Rani's inability to govern the country during the last two years became so apparent that he could think in terms of deposing her and instal a male heir to the Gaddi. He was
convinced during the last two years that the people would never like the rule of a woman. Further, he was aware of the fact that the peasants were also discontented with the Rani. The revenue assessment during her rule was far from being satisfactory. The assessment was deliberately made heavy in case of all those who were known to be partisans of the leaders of the Resistance Movement. Freehold lands were resumed and were given to the favourites of the Rani on nominal rent. At last, when the tribals rose against the administration and the discontented peasants joined them, Capt. Wilkinson came to the conclusion that the rebellion could not subside unless Rani Mohan Kumari was replaced by a male. Accordingly, he made negotiation with the Rani, on more than one occasions, on the subject of retiring on a pension. The Rani, fully aware of her want of power, agreed to accept a pension and retire if the British Government would take the country under its own immediate management. At the same time the Rani also expressed her feeling that it would be quite a disgrace if the country would be placed, after she retired, under any ruler of the Chauhan family. Capt. Wilkinson sent a report suggesting the deposition of the Rani and the Government accepted his recommendation. The Rani was subsequently, deposed in 1833, and the choice for the future succession fell on Narayan Sing in preference to others.

However, Rani Mohan Kumari, on the 9th of October 1833 left for Cuttack which she did select as a place of residence. She was accompanied by her youngest daughter and her mother-in-law Mukta Devi. Prior to her departure, permission was obtained from the Government to give to the four members of the royal family who

1 Letter No.56, dated 13.9.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, Political Department, (NAI).
accompanied her and who were the adopted sons of her late father-in-law and late husband, each a village which would be a provision for themselves and their families after her death. Accordingly, Bullu Babu was assigned with the village of Jhilminda, Narayan Sing Babu of Bauseen Mora, Bhagwan Babu of Chichinda and Nakru Babu of Kundbutta. Further, the Rani was promised of financial assistance from the Government on the occasion of her daughter's marriage.

The Rani's pension commenced from the 1st of October 1833 as she decided to abdicate on the 9th of October 1833. She was paid pension monthly at the rate of Rs. 666.10.8 - from the treasury of the Political Agent of the South West Frontier.

Thus the Britishers succeeded in weaving the network to engulf Sambalpur in their orbit of political domination precluding a strong and united opposition to their designs by creating confusion in the ranks and file of the Chauhan families; and inducting fear and horror in public mind to such acts of resistance and rebellion. The plan was set for gradual but consistent interference for final amalgamation of Sambalpur with their Empire.

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1 Letter No.141, dated 13.10.1833, from Capt. Wilkinson to Secretary to Government, Political Department, (NAI).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.